NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
WESTERN REGION
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

January 14, 2003

DEPUTY REGIONAL DIRECTOR

NOAA Home Page Continues to Set Records

Traffic to the NOAA home page in 2002 broke the record previously set in 2001. From January through December 2002, the http://www.NOAA.gov site received more than 262 million hits, which is 60 million more hits than in 2001. This represents an increase in Web traffic of 30 percent. For 2002, there were more than 16.1 million pages viewed on the NOAA home page.

Online Editor and Webmaster for NOAA's home page, Greg Hernandez, summarized the year's activities. He notes, "If you add the traffic for the NOAA home page news stories, which sit on a separate Web server, the totals go off the chart. The total for both sites is more than 275 million hits and more than 21.6 million page views."

According to Hernandez, the top traffic months of the year were September, October and December. September had more than 32.7 million hits and more than 1.9 million page views—the most for any month in 2002. The reasons for that were Hurricanes Isidore and Lili. (October: 28+ million hits; 1.6+ million page views; December: 28+ million hits; 1.6+ million page views.)

Most of the traffic to the NOAA home page came from the dot-com and dot-net worlds. This accounted for 83 percent of the traffic. The U.S. government accounted for five percent of the traffic, educational institutions four percent, military two percent and non-profit or dot-org was one percent. The top five visiting countries were Mexico, Canada, Japan, France, United Kingdom and Italy.

The top five stories for 2002 were El Niño's return, Hurricane Isidore, Hurricane Lili, the USA drought and the wildfires. The intense interest in these stories demonstrates once again that when severe weather threatens the USA mainland, Web surfers turn to the NOAA.gov site to get the latest information.

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

STATEMENT OF THE WEEK: The following statement of the week is a Red Flag Warning from San Diego. This product is an example of one of the many excellent products issued by San Diego and Los Angeles during the extreme Santa Ana wind event of January 5th through 7th...

RED FLAG WARNING
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SAN DIEGO CA
900 AM PST SUN JAN 5 2003

CAZ042-043-048-050-055>058-060>062-060000-

...RED FLAG WARNING HAS BEEN ISSUED FOR ALL OF EXTREME SOUTHWESTERN CALIFORNIA FOR STRONG GUSTY SANTA ANA WINDS AND LOW HUMIDITY FROM MIDNIGHT TONIGHT THROUGH TUESDAY MORNING...

DISCUSSION...
LOW PRESSURE ALOFT WILL MOVE SOUTH ACROSS THE INTERIOR SOUTHWESTERN UNITED STATES LATE TONIGHT AND MONDAY WHILE VERY STRONG SURFACE HIGH PRESSURE DEVELOPS OVER THE GREAT BASIN. THIS WILL RESULT IN STRONG NORTHEAST WINDS ACROSS THE AREA...WITH THE STRONGEST WINDS THROUGH AND BELOW PASSES AND CANYONS. SOME OF THE STRONGER SUSTAINED WINDS IN THESE AREAS WILL REACH 30 TO 45 MPH WITH LOCAL GUSTS TO 60 MPH OR HIGHER. SOME SUSTAINED WINDS EVEN ABOVE 25 MPH WILL OCCUR AT TIMES OVER THE DESERTS DUE TO THE STRONG SURFACE PRESSURE GRADIENTS. RELATIVE HUMIDITIES WILL BE VERY LOW...WITH VALUES BELOW 15 PERCENT AT TIMES...NOT ONLY DURING THE DAY BUT EVEN LOCALLY AT NIGHT. HOWEVER...RELATIVE HUMIDITIES WILL BEGIN TO RECOVER IN SOME AREAS BY TUESDAY MORNING DUE TO MOISTURE MOVING WEST AROUND THE AREA OF LOW PRESSURE ALOFT. WINDS WILL GRADUALLY DECREASE TUESDAY AFTERNOON.

PLEASE ADVISE THE APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS AND FIRE CREWS IN THE FIELD OF THIS RED FLAG WARNING.

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Fire Weather Program: The transition of fire weather forecast and warning responsibility in California was completed on January 2, 2003. The California transition was the last step in the reconstruction of the fire weather program across the nation.

On January 5th, the San Diego and Los Angeles WFOs issued their first official Red Flag Warnings. These warnings were proceeded by Fire Weather Watches and headlines 36-48 hours in advance. Under normal circumstances, Red Flag Warnings and Fire Weather Watches are not issued this time of year in Southern California. However, this was forecasted to be an extreme event which

verified with wind gusts 60-100 mph and relative humidities below 15 percent in some areas. Numerous brush fires were reported, and 2 large fires in Los Angeles County forced a few residents to evacuate. WFO San Diego received great accolades concerning their warnings from a few of the County Fire Chiefs within their area.

NOAA Weather Radio Showcased at Consumer Electronics Show: The first truly exciting innovation in years for NOAA Weather Radio on the consumer side was unveiled last week at the annual Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas. Thomson Electronics (RCA) debuted their new Alert Guard feature for a line of television sets that will be sold beginning in the spring. Alert Guard TVs include a NWR receiver within the set, and can alert people of weather and all-hazards warnings regardless of what they are watching (TV, cable, satellite, DVD/VCR, video games), or even if the TV is turned off. The sets have an easy to use configuration screen so people can set up the system to receive SAME codes for their location; the TV will even scan for local NWR broadcasts and program itself to pick up the local SAME codes right out of the box. USA Today ran an article on Alert Guard last week; you may read the article at http://www.usatoday.com/tech/techreviews/products/2003-01-09-ces-alerts_x.htm

Craig Schmidt joined staff from NWSH in promoting NWR at the CES. They met with most manufacturers of NWR receivers and discussed the NWR system with others who are interested in adding NWR to their products. During a meeting with Thomson officials, it was clear by the amount of time and money they have spent that they expect the Alert Guard feature to be a big seller. They are prepared to produce one million of the sets in 2004, and may include future innovations such as NWR receivers within the remote controls. Once Alert Guard hit the street, the NWS can probably expect an increase in consumer questions on NWR reception and programming. Craig will be working with Thomson to make sure the documentation they include with the TVs accurately reflects NWR capability and gives customers good instructions on how to find appropriate NWR information.

MPC Name Changes

Effective January 12, 2003, the official names of the Marine Prediction Center and its two branches within the National Centers for Environmental Prediction, NWS, are re-titled as follows:

WX4000 From: Marine Prediction Center W/NP4 to Ocean Prediction Center
WX4100 From: Marine Forecast Branch W/NP41 to Ocean Forecast Branch
WX4200 From: Marine Applications Branch W/NP42 to Ocean Applications Branch

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

GFE/IFPS Workshop: OCWWS and WR co-sponsored a GFE/IFPS workshop Jan 14-16, 2003 at the Forecast Systems Laboratory in Boulder, Colorado. The workshop focused on IFPS issues in complex terrain/coastal areas with an emphasis toward the practical sharing of information. The workshop also included training on the new GFE text formatters. Participants included one IFPS Focal Point from each WR forecast office and River Forecast Center, plus two offices from Alaska Region, six people from Pacific Region and one participant from the Denver, Grand Junction, Riverton, and Albuquerque offices.

UAP Applications Due by February 21, 2003: The NWS University Assignment Program (UAP) offers opportunities for both full-time and part-time training assignments in job or career-related study at an accredited educational facility. It enables employees to keep abreast of advances in science and technology, and other innovations within their occupational fields. The program also provides an opportunity for all employees to learn new skills, as well as to develop and improve abilities they require in current or future positions. The UAP should be used only when the needed set of skills or knowledge requires a comprehensive long-term study program rather than a series of unconnected, short-term courses.

All application materials must be received at the Regional Office (SSD) by February 21, 2003. Ask your MIC or SOO for additional information.

CSTAR RFP Published in the Federal Register: The FY03 CSTAR RFP has been published in the Federal Register. The CSTAR RFP is the process where the NWS selects and funds Cooperative Institutes. These are 3 year agreements where the University and NWS work together on operational issues. This has been a very successful program In general, this is the next step after a University has had a successful series of COMET grants.

Please pass along information about the RFP to anyone who may be interested. The deadline for submitting proposals is Feb. 21, 2003.

NCEP Winter Storms Reconnaissance (WSR) 2003: The Monterey office will be serving as the Western Region Focal Point for this season's Winter Storms Reconnaissance (WSR) Program. Their role in this regard is very similar to WR GOES rapid scan requests: Their job is to appropriately pass along any requests we receive to NCEP. The basic idea of the program is to deploy spatially and temporally targeted dropsondes well out over the Pacific from

aircraft flying out of Honolulu and Anchorage -- with the objective of improving the NCEP model forecasts in critical weather situations, and when there is significant model disagreement or uncertainty. For the western U.S., the constraints of the program are such that the forecast event of interest would typically have to be identified 60-96 hours in advance (for a request to be made for targeted obs). So, for example, if we're concerned about a strong storm projected by the AVN to move onshore over our CWA on a Friday, we'd want to be making our targeted obs request either the preceding Monday morning or Tuesday morning. Procedures to follow have been forwarded to all WFO's and RFC's. If your office wishes to make such a request, please have your senior forecaster on shift call the Monterey lead forecaster prior to 6:15 am PST (use 831-656-1717).

GOES-12 will replace GOES-8 as GOES-East March 31, 2003: GOES-12 is scheduled to replace GOES-8 as the GOES-East operational spacecraft on March 31, 2003. The exact date and time may be modified slightly and will be further solidified after the GOES-12 maneuvers.
Additional information on these plans may be found at http://www.oso.noaa.gov/goes/index.htm under "GOES-8 to GOES-12 Transition Plan.

Pacific Northwest Weather Workshop - 2003: The Pacific Northwest Weather Workshop will be held Friday and Saturday, 7 & 8 March 2003, at the NOAA Western Regional Center campus at Sand Point in Seattle, Washington. This annual conference, sponsored by the National Weather Service, University of Washington, and Puget Sound Chapter of the American Meteorological Society, covers recent developments in weather forecasting and observational technologies, major weather events of the past year, and topics dealing with Western U.S. meteorology.

Sessions on northwest weather and related topics will include: new technologies (including gridded forecast applications), numerical weather prediction applications, and general forecasting. In addition, likely special sessions include: case studies of major Western U.S. weather events, updates on the local MM5 mesoscale modeling efforts, results of the PNW-2001 ozone study and IMPROVE I/II microphysical field experiment, and implications of global warming on the Pacific Northwest.

The workshop format will include several invited presentations and shorter submitted talks. Also, a poster session will occur to allow substantial time for interaction and discussion amongst the workshop attendees.
Pre-registration is required for all attendees. Visit our web site at: **www.atmos.washington.edu/~cliff/PNW2003.html** for latest information and on-line registration.

For more information contact Clifford Mass, Dept of Atmospheric

Sciences, Box 351640, University of Washington, Seattle WA 98195 (206-685-0190, cliff@atmos.washington.edu), or Brad Colman/Chris Hill, NWS Forecast Office, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115 (206.526.6095 x 224/222, brad.colman@noaa.gov or chris.hill@noaa.gov).

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

AWIPS Status: In the Western Region, six of the twenty-four Western Region WFOs have installed the new Weather Archive Servers. All but one site in Western Region have installed AWIPS Release 5.2.2. WFO Pendleton, OR, will install operational build 1 (OB1) Wednesday, Wednesday, January 15. WFO Pendleton is one of the sites that field tested the AWIPS Linux pre-processors which are a pre-requisite for the OB1 installation.

Site Survey Completed: A site survey was completed for a new NWR site on Potosi Mountain, NV. The new NWR transmitter will be funded by WSH to provide coverage for southwest Nevada along the I-15 corridor. Installation is slated for April 2003.

Site Contact Maintenance: A site contact maintenance quality assurance inspection of the Red Mountain (Las Vegas) NWR site was completed. Everything was found to be in good order at the site.